



THREATS TO LIBRARIES

Protests helped to reduce the cutbacks which were initially planned for Sydney's Mitchell Library; unfortunately, there are now threats to the staff and books at Sydney University's Fisher Library. David Malouf and Bob Ellis spoke at a rally in front of Fisher on 13 August 2014 and said how much their work depends on books and libraries. Malouf said no one would dream of removing every second note by Mozart or cut pieces out of art works.

'...NO ONE WOULD DREAM OF REMOVING EVERY SECOND NOTE BY MOZART OR CUT PIECES OUT OF ART WORKS.'

This threat is not just to one library, one university or one country. Unfortunately, the current books-averse decisions will stop the gains made by 'standing on the shoulders of giants'

and instead there will only be data-free research. There is little difference between dumping, storing or burning books – books are destroyed or become inaccessible. This is not new as Nicholson Baker made clear in *Double Fold*. Since the 1950s, many of the world's major libraries have shed hard copies of newspapers. Ray Bradbury depicts the nightmare of a book-free world in *Fahrenheit 451*.

Online is not forever, sometimes for less than a decade. It is possible to read the thousand year old *Domesday Book* but the BBC's 1986 computer-based, multimedia *Domesday Project*, which cost £2.5 million, was unreadable by 2002. Our digital heritage needs to be saved but we also need to save hard copies of the books, newspapers, journals and archives which libraries are so busy digitising. Let's not throw out the book babies or the digital bathwater.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

INCITE will get the new year off to a great start with a round up of all things award-related. Have you won one? Created one? From awards for brilliant buildings to smart services, riveting writing or grants for research, we want to know what's happening across Australia. It's time to take a bow!

We'll also tell you what's in store for our industry's premier information technology conference, ALIA Information Online 2015 in February. Have you been re-energising classic collections by getting 'appy' or looking at the world through high tech? Share your successes and tips in our pre-conference technology feature.

The deadline for contributions is 18 November 2014. Check the guidelines for contributions on the ALIA website and email your stories and images to incite@alia.org.au. Please note all images must be high resolution (at least 300DPI, 500KB or higher) and sent separately as jpg files. Images may be reproduced in print and online.